

Bevendean Primary School and Nursery

Minutes of the Finance, Personnel & Premises Committee held on Thursday 16th March 2023 at 5.00pm [HYBRID MEETING]

Present: Eugene Arnold, Mark Dally (Headteacher), Lydia Majic, Adrian Strange (Committee Chair).

Also in attendance: Andrea Hammond (Business Manager), Andy Thomas (Clerk).

Apologies: Sarah Miller (Associate Member).

1. Quoracy of meeting

LM chaired the meeting pending AS' arrival and welcomed those present. The meeting was quorate.

2. Apologies

Apologies had been received from SM. AS had indicated late arrival.

3. Minutes of the meeting on 19th January 2023

a. Approval of minutes

The draft minutes were **agreed** subject to the following two amendments:

- Amend the answer to the third question under Item 6a to read: "*Staff were on fixed-term contracts.....*".
- Delete the following sentence from the fifth paragraph of Item 6a: "*There was a £16k overspend overall.*"

b. Action Points/ matters arising

The Action Points were reviewed as follows:

- AP1 *Safer recruitment training* It was reported that SM had now completed the training but that SC had not. This would be chased up.
ACTION 1 - AT

- AP2 *Wellbeing Link Governor/ staff exit interviews* AT had contacted MC re: exit interviews and visits but this would be followed up. **ACTION 2 - AT**
- AP3 *Marketing leaflets* More tracking data had now been received from the company. It was evident that the leaflet had not been delivered in all areas. There were five thousand leaflets remaining – these would be distributed in the Summer subject to finalising the distribution method. It was **agreed** that an update would be given at the next FGB meeting.

4. Finance report

a. *Business Manager's report*

AH presented her Business Manager's Report, which had been circulated in advance. Reference was made to a number of aspects of the Report in relation to:

- i. *Finance*: Pupil numbers; budget update – additional income and expenditure; virements (none); and write-offs.
- ii. *Personnel*: Staff numbers; staffing changes; Acting Headteacher appointment; flu jabs; Headteacher appointment; Deputy Headteacher recruitment; staff absence data.
- iii. *Premises*: Refurbishment; Schools Condition Data Collection survey; Electrical Installation Condition report; Health & Safety Link Governor visit.

The following questions were asked:

- ***Noting that the Electrical Installation Condition Report was every 5 years, was there always something that came up?*** This was usually the case. A different company had now undertaken the exercise. It was safe to continue using the building whilst the remedial works were being done.
- ***What period did the staff absence data cover?*** This was the academic year, so it was nearing its end. There had been an increase in requests for GP appointments – these were being granted in order to promote fitness and wellbeing; and avoid absence arising.
- ***Could the caretaker carry out electrical works?*** No, he was not qualified to do so.

b. *Draft budget*

It was reported that the budget spreadsheet had been submitted to the Local Authority, but there was as yet no feedback. Staffing figures now included pay incremental rises effective from April. Staff costs included “on-costs” (pensions and National Insurance).

The “staffing expenditure” section of the draft budget document was reviewed in detail. It was noted that expenditure on staff represented 83.4% of the total budget, which was too high.

The following questions were asked:

- **Did the apprenticeship levy still need to be paid even if the school employed no apprentices?** Yes, all employers over a certain size had to pay the levy. If apprentices were in place there would be an additional cost to the school.
- **What was the incentive of the apprentice initiative?** This was to provide job opportunities.
- **Would there be financial benefits to the school?** It was not believed so.
- **Could this be looked at again next time the school was recruiting?** Yes, this was agreed.
- **Would the SLT structure be reviewed once the outcome of the Deputy Headteacher recruitment process was known?** Yes. There were some salary implications involved, depending on who was appointed to the role.

The “other expenditure” section of the draft budget document was reviewed in detail. It was noted that:

- There was an additional more detailed break-down of the “Curriculum” element available.
- The school was seeking to reduce photocopying costs.
- The cost of the Services to Schools contract had risen.
- Insurance for teachers’ absence had been discontinued but wellbeing for all staff was continuing.

The following questions were asked:

- **If support staff were absent on maternity leave how would this be covered?** The intention was to discuss staff insurance cover later in the meeting. This had in any case only been in place for the last 18 months.
- **What was the cost of Parent Pay per transaction?** Data on this was not to hand but it was free to the school. The school did not pay for the licence.

It was confirmed that everything had been looked at in great detail in order to identify cost reductions. There had been a significant amount of work involved in this.

The “income” section of the draft budget document was reviewed in detail. It was noted that there was potential to let out the school field for weekend football matches.

In summary, it was reported that there was a total cumulative *deficit of £102,024* for the first year of the budget. This was an increase on what had been anticipated and represented a bleak picture.

The above position had been reported to the Local Authority.

Work had however been undertaken on a possible “Option B” budget incorporating the following changes:

- In the event that SM was appointed as Deputy Headteacher, this would result in two leaders and an in-class ECT.
- A UPS teacher may leave and be replaced by an ECT. This was however subject to confirmation.
- Regarding staff insurance, if support staff were absent the school could generally manage. Most absences were in any case short term. Claims could not be made unless absences were over 10 days. If the school withdrew from the insurance cover money could fund an additional member of staff who could cover long-term sick absence.

The above would result in a total cumulative *surplus of £9k*. It was anticipated that there may be some contract cleaning savings in addition to this. It was believed that it may be possible to achieve a total cumulative *surplus of £21k*.

There was therefore scope for further savings. The above was just a possible scenario at this stage. There were “unknowns” yet to come.

The following questions were asked:

- ***What was the percentage sickness absence?*** This was 5.36%.
- ***Would one additional member of staff offset this?*** There was £20k in the budget for non-maternity absence insurance premiums. The current year had been relatively poor in terms of staff absence. If there was no long-term sickness going forward, £20k would be lost.
- ***How much would it cost to add one further staff member?*** The difference between the increased salary cost and the insurance premium saving would be confirmed. It was envisaged that a current part-time staff member would be converted to full-time. **ACTION 3 - MD**

It was confirmed that the draft budget submitted to the Local Authority was based on the assumption that SM would *not* be appointed to the Deputy Headteacher role [a worst case scenario financially].

The following questions were asked:

- ***Would there be a need to apply for a licensed deficit?*** Once the outcome of the Deputy Headteacher recruitment process was known, this would need to be discussed.
- ***Was an emergency/ interim meeting of the FPP needed?*** Yes. At stake was the difference between being in surplus or in deficit. **ACTION 4 - AS/ AT**

MD and AS thanked AH for her hard work on this matter.

c. SFVS

It was reported that LM, MD and AH had met to review the SFVS in detail. Some changes/ updates had resulted.

There were two proposed summary actions [as per the document circulated in advance] which required FPP agreement. These were **agreed**.

The document required a physical signature. It was **agreed** that LM would go into the school for this purpose.

5. Policy reviews

a. Teacher appraisal and capability

Reference was made to the two policy documents, which had been circulated in advance.

The following questions were asked:

- ***Were the documents based on model policies?*** Yes.
- ***Could “he” and “she” be replaced with “they”?*** Yes, this would be **done** going forward (all policies).

The policies were **agreed**.

It was further agreed that:

- The policy folder would be shared with Governors. **ACTION 5 - MD**
- The policy review schedule would be updated. **ACTION 6 - MD**

b. First aid

It was **agreed** that this would be deferred to the next meeting.

c. Governors’ allowances

Reference was made to the document, which had been circulated in advance. This based on a model policy.

It was noted that £300 had been allocated in the budget for Governors’ allowances. It was **agreed** that this should remain in place.

The policy was **agreed**.

d. Policies for review at next meeting

The Premises Management Documents (multiple) were due for review and sign-off at the next meeting.

It was **agreed** that these would accordingly be included on the agenda (in addition to the first aid policy as above).

The following questions were asked:

- **How were staff made aware of policies?** It was **agreed** that the policy folder would be shared with staff; and email would be issued; and a familiarisation session conducted.
- **Could the Local Authority HR officer be invited in to speak to staff?** It was **agreed** that contact details would be included in the above email.

6. Governor Finance training

AT reported that he had been in touch with the Local Authority, which had advised that finance and SFVS training would be available in the Summer Term.

It was agreed that this would be followed-up and publicised, with all Governors encouraged to undertake the training. **ACTION 7 - AT**

7. Review of Action Points

The Action Points were reviewed and noted for inclusion in the minutes.

8. AOB

a) Disposal and write-offs form record

AH set out a number of disposals and write-offs included in a formal document which needed to be signed off.

The document was **agreed** and would be signed by one of the Governing Body Co-Chairs/ FPP Chair and Headteacher.

b) Purchase orders

There were 3 purchase orders which needed to be signed by one of the Governing Body Co-Chairs/ FPP Chair.

This was **agreed**.

c) Deputy Headteacher recruitment

It was confirmed that the selection process was due to take place during the following week.

9. Date of next meeting

The date of the next scheduled meeting was **Thursday 4th May**. As agreed under Item 4b, an additional emergency/ interim meeting to discuss the budget would be held on a **prior date to be confirmed**.

[**post-meeting note**: it was subsequently agreed that no additional meeting would be held and that the meeting scheduled for 4th May would be deferred to a later date].

10. Close of meeting

There being no further business, the meeting was duly closed.

Signed _____ Date

***** Please ensure you check Action Points and Decisions from this meeting below**

Action points from the meeting of the FPP committee held on 16th March 2023

Action	By	Person responsible
1. Remind SC to undertake Safer Recruitment training [Item 3b].	ASAP	AT
2. Remind MC re: staff exit interviews and Link Governor visits [Item 3b].	ASAP	AT
3. Confirm difference between the increased salary cost of increased staffing resource and insurance premium savings. [Item 4b].	ASAP	MD
4. Arrange emergency/ interim FPP meeting to discuss budget [Item 4b].	*TBC	AS/ AT
5. Share policy folder with Governors [Item 5a].	ASAP	MD
6. Update policy review schedule [Item 5a].	ASAP	AT
7. Finance/ SFVS training to be followed-up and publicised, with all Governors encouraged to sign-up [Item 6].	Summer Term	AT

*To be timetabled for future meetings.

Decisions made at the meeting of the FPP committee held on 16th March 2023

Decision	Agenda Item
1. Establish previous minutes as final.	3a
2. An update on marketing leaflets to be given at the May FGB meeting.	3b

3. Apprentices to be considered when the school next recruited.	4b
4. SFVS to be taken forward.	4c
5. SFVS to be signed.	4c
6. Replace "he" and "she" with "they" in all policies going forward	
7. Teacher appraisal and capability policies to be implemented.	5a
8. First aid policy deferred to next FPP meeting.	5b
9. £300 Governors' allowances budget allocation to be retained.	5c
10. Governors' allowances policy to be implemented.	5c
11. Premises Management Documents to be signed-off at the next FPP meeting.	5d
12. Policy documents to be shared with staff by means of the policy folder; an email; and a familiarisation session.	5d
13. Local Authority HR Officer contact details to be included in the above email.	5d
14. Disposals and write-offs form to be signed off.	8a
15. Purchase orders to be signed off.	8b